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SUBJECT: ACOTA PROGRAM MOVES FORWARD IN NIGERIA

1. SUMMARY. During 8-11 August 2005, an African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program team met with officials of the Nigerian Army to jointly plan the future of the ACOTA program in Nigeria. The meetings resulted in decisive progress in terms of a concept and schedule for ACOTA peace support operations training as well as agreement on ACOTA equipment support for Nigerian peace support operations trainers and peacekeepers. Beyond the plans achieved for ACOTA training and equipping activities, the Nigerian Army requested receipt of a battalion deployment equipment package from the Global Operations Initiative (GPOI). The purpose of this requested equipment would be to support Nigeria's recent deployment of three battalions of peacekeepers to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS II/Darfur), ongoing Nigerian battalion deployments to peacekeeping operations in Liberia (UNMIL) and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and projected battalion deployments to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).  
END SUMMARY

2. The ACOTA team consisted of Chip Beck, State Department ACOTA Policy Coordinator, Richard Roan, State Department ACOTA Training Manager, Charles Ikins, OSD ACOTA Project Officer and Major Brent Bidus, U.S. European Command ACOTA Project Officer. Colonel Sue Ann Sandusky, U.S. Defense Attache to Nigeria accompanied the team to all meetings. The ACOTA team met in several sessions with Brigadier General I. I. Hassan, Director of Peacekeeping Operations for the Nigerian Army and officers of his staff. The ACOTA team also visited the site of projected ACOTA training at the Infantry Corps Centre School at Jaji, Nigeria.

3. General Hassan and his staff were exceptionally receptive, professional, cordial and well prepared. This same level of receptivity and preparedness was exhibited by Major General B.S. Biloyok, the commander of the Infantry Corps Centre and School (ICCS) at Jaji, and his staff. The Nigerians expressed complete acceptance of the ACOTA program and were well prepared to move forward with definitive planning and action. This approach was a significant step beyond the hesitance about ACOTA partnership expressed by Nigerian Defense Headquarters senior staff members during the ACOTA team's last visit to Abuja in April 2005.

4. The ACOTA team achieved agreement with the Nigerian military on ACOTA training and equipping activities. In April-May 2006 ACOTA will provide four weeks of command and staff training for Nigerian Army trainers. In June-July 2006, ACOTA is projected to provide three weeks of peace support operations soldier skills field training for Nigerian Army trainers. In October-November 2006, ACOTA is projected to commence mentoring and assisting Nigerian trainers in training battalions preparing for deployment to peacekeeping operations. The Nigerian Army intends to employ ACOTA-trained trainers in providing peace support operations pre-deployment training for as many as twelve battalions annually at the Peacekeeping Wing of the ICCS at Jaji. In regard to equipping activities, the ACOTA team and Nigerian officers together reviewed Nigeria's requirements and agreed on the details of the provision of training support equipment for the Peacekeeping Wing of the ICCS as well as individual equipment for Nigerian soldiers participating in ACOTA training.

5. The Nigerian Army requested three areas of assistance beyond the scope of the ACOTA training and equipping activities outlined above. These include, (1) approximately \$350,000 to support the completion of ongoing facility construction at the Peacekeeping Training Wing at Jaji, (2) extension of the current MPRI Simulation Center Support at the Nigerian Armed Forces Staff College at Jaji (one year beyond the current expiration of December 2005), and (3) receipt of at least one battalion deployment equipment package from the Global Operations Initiative (GPOI). The purpose of this latter equipment would be to support Nigeria's recent deployment of three battalions of peacekeepers to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS II/Darfur), ongoing Nigerian battalion deployments to peacekeeping operations in Liberia (UNMIL) and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and projected battalion deployments to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

6. The ACOTA team expressed the commitment to ensuring that all ACOTA training and equipping activities are full complementary with the ongoing efforts of the United Kingdom in supporting the creation and sustainment of the ICCS

Peacekeeping Wing at Jaji. Full cooperation with the United Kingdom was explicitly requested by the Nigerian Army Chief of Staff. The Commander of the British Defense Advisory Team in Abuja, Colonel Robert Russell, accompanied the ACOTA team on initial meetings with General Hassan and his staff and assured the ACOTA team that all of the ACOTA plans were welcomed by the United Kingdom and fully complementary with the UK's strategy at Jaji. Both Colonel Russell and General Hassan invited ACOTA trainers and U.S. military personnel to observe joint British-Nigerian peace support operations training at the Peacekeeping Wing in November-December 2005.

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